

Good Morning Riders,

I recently had the pleasure of cycling this year's route, and after doing so I have compiled the following notes and observations from that experience:



- **Bring your sturdiest wheels with the widest tire your frame and brakes will accommodate** - The road surface will fluctuate between beautiful pristine asphalt to “pavement” with wheel-eating potholes, and everything in between. There will be miles of trails with root upheaval along with short periods on unpaved trails and roads.
- **Protect your contact points** - My contact points took a beating, and by the end of each day my hands, feet and backside had had enough. I can't overemphasize the importance of buying the very best shorts/gloves/shoes and testing them on long rides before you arrive.
- **Prepare your body for long days in the saddle** - There is no substitute for showing up prepared to ride for 5+ hours each day for a week. However, your ride will actually be a series of 1.5 to 2 hour rides interrupted by scheduled rest stops or lunch. Take this time to stretch those tight muscles between efforts and maybe reapply a little chamois cream.
- **Don't underestimate the effects of riding in the heat and sun** - The week I cycled the route the heat index hovered at or above 100 each day, and I must admit I wasn't properly prepared and subsequently suffered the effects. The good news is that you will have a very dedicated support team making sure that you are properly hydrated, and we'll have plenty of sunscreen to help protect your skin.
- **Follow the unique riding rules of bike trails** – You will be on bike trails for more than 150 miles. Our trail permit for the Mount Vernon Trail that we'll use most days requires that we:
 1. Ride in groups of 12 or less
 2. Stagger our packs by a minimum of 4 minutes
 3. Maintain a pace of 15 mph or less
 4. Ride single file
- **Employ best practices on bike trails:**
 1. Trails are multi-use, thus you are likely to encounter joggers, dog walkers, baby strollers and recreational cyclists, so be hyper aware of your surroundings and cycle defensively.
 2. SLOW DOWN and be prepared to stop. People are unpredictable.
 3. Yield to heels is the rule on these paths.
 4. Ride single file and to the right. Pass on the left, making sure to call out your pass “On your left.”
 5. Bells are strongly encouraged to alert fellow trail users of your desire to pass.
 6. Be aware of your surroundings before passing and make sure you signal your intentions to pass, slow down, stop or avoid hazards.
 7. If you must stop, make sure you pull completely off the trail so as not to impede other users.
 8. Be nice, spread the Tree Love!
- **Litter and public urination** – Let's be good citizens and not contribute to the problem of roadside trash. Please be discreet if you need a nature break between rest stops.
- **Rules of the Road Ride** - The STIHL Tour des Trees is a Rules of Road ride; we do not employ police assistance navigating intersections, so it is incumbent on us to adhere to the

traffic laws to reduce potential conflict with motorized traffic, keep our peloton safe and to properly represent the Tour and its partners.

- **Riding Two Abreast or Controlling the Lane** - If you've ridden with me before you know that I promote the principle of riding two abreast, or when alone, controlling the lane. This practice makes you more visible and keeps motorists from attempting to squeeze by us. But let's make sure that we too are good citizens of the road by making sure our line is contained within the lane, that we platoon our pack (by not riding in groups of more than 16 or 8 x 2 riders long), provide plenty of room between our platoons and single up when is safe for us to do so. Here is one of my favorite articles on these principles: <http://www.bikewalknc.org/2015/04/why-cyclists-ride-two-abreast/>
- **Navigation** - I cycled the entire route using my phone (on low battery mode) and the RidewithGPS app to navigate. It worked flawlessly, and with the supplement of a backup USB charger I made it through long days without any issues. Below are the tools that had me easily navigating the route:
 1. <https://ridewithgps.com/app> - I generate all of our routes using the RidewithGPS software and this app works wonderfully. Once I have completed the final evaluation and marked the routes I will publish them within a STIHL Tour des Trees event that I have created in RWGPS.
 2. I use the [Quadlock](#) system on my bike and in my car. It works very well and keeps your phone secure and easy to access.
 3. I use a simple [Anker](#) USB charger while cycling long distances but there other brands available such as [Mophie](#).

Ride on!

Paul Wood
Tour Director, STIHL Tour des Trees
Black Bear Adventures
pwoodbba@gmail.com
(843) 693-8448